



Teenagers stranded by high water

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Whitewater
1982-039

By Kevin Walker

Some years ago RMRU member Pete Carlson researched the team records to find what day the most missions occurred. That day was Tuesday. On this particular Tuesday I was pretty sure we would be called. To be honest, it was not because of statistics, it just happened to be storming everywhere in the county. The call came at 1:30 p.m. for two stranded teenagers up the Whitewater. Rendezvous point: The Whitewater Fish Hatchery.

Walt Walker, John Dew and I were the first to arrive. There we were met by Capt. Ray Canova and Sgt. Pete Kyusa of the Banning station. They told us that Don Landells was enroute with one of his Bell jet Rangers. As we waited they told us that a father and his two sons and family dog were hiking up in the Whitewater when it began to rain quite hard. In no time the water level rose considerably, and the group found themselves stranded near Stills Landing (app. four miles above the hatchery). While attempting to cross the swiftly moving current, the father lost his balance and was swept down stream. He did manage to get out of the river on the other side. He told the boys to stay put and he would go out for help.

Don arrived with 40MC, we loaded our packs and were airborne heading up the wide flood plane towards Stills Landing. We were only about one mile above the hatchery when Walt spotted the pair walking down stream. Don quickly found a spot to set down in and amongst the rocks. Upon reaching the boys they told us that the water level lowered enough after the heavy rains stopped so that they could make the crossing safely. With that, we loaded the rain soaked pair and their dog (who was quite apprehensive about helicopters) into the bird. Don flew them out, and quickly returned for us. That concluded a quick mission.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.

